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ART. III.—*Audubon's Biography of Birds*.

Ornithological Biography ; or an Account of the Habits of the Birds of America ; accompanied by Descriptions of the Objects represented in the Work entitled the Birds of America, interspersed with Delineations of American Scenery and Manners. By JOHN JAMES AUDUBON, F. R. SS. L. and E., &c. Philadelphia. 1831.

Many years ago, the first wit of his day, representing the character and habits of John Bull, stated that, although he was peaceable in his disposition, and fully convinced of the fact, that whosoever goeth to war must do it at his own charges, he did nevertheless, if he heard the sound of a fray, however distant, rise from his warm bed at night, put on such clothing as came to hand, grasp his cudgel, and go forth to the scene of action, where he generally received a battering, which would have cracked a crown less substantial. When this ceremony was over, the parties repaired to a tavern, where John, in consideration of receiving many praises for his valor, closed the concern by paying the bill, and departed extremely well satisfied with his own exploits. This account, though meant for an individual, describes to the life almost every war, in which any country has been engaged for the last two centuries ; and nations are growing so well persuaded of this, that the great body of the human race, who were formerly too happy to be permitted to die for the glory of one or two, now testify a strong reluctance to making themselves food for powder, without strong reasons for such a proceeding. This grand discovery on the part of the multitude, however auspicious to themselves, is exceedingly inconvenient to those who are ambitious of fame. Happily other paths to distinction are still open, which are trodden with a zeal and spirit as resolute and somewhat more rational, than ever was found in the bloodshod march of glory. Some esteem it a privilege to be frozen up during three quarters of the year, in the dead night-calm of a polar sea ; others spring forward to seize the fortunate chance of leaving their bones whitening on the sands, beneath the red heat of an African sun ; some are enchanted with the idea of tracing the course of rivers, which, according to the best authorities, have neither beginning nor end ; others can die contented when they have scaled the tops of mountains,

where they stand, petrified with cold, several inches higher than man ever stood before. Now, all this restless energy, withdrawn from the fields of war, is like the electric fluid, harmless and useful when diffused among the elements of nature, though so disastrous when concentrated in the thunder-cloud.

There are many men in the world sufficiently intellectual in their tastes, but too active in their habits to submit to quiet literary labor. There are some, whose minds can never exert themselves, except when their frame is in action; and doubtless that employment is best suited to our nature, which engages at the same time the physical and intellectual powers. The pursuit, in which the author of the work before us is of late so honorably distinguished, is of this description; it combines within itself many circumstances which give it attraction; it requires the self-complacent skill of a sportsman, and the wild romance of an adventurer; it opens a field for the beautiful powers of an artist, and the fine discrimination of a man of taste; it adds the dignity of science to the exciting consciousness of danger. We do not wonder in the least, that the heart of such a man is bound up in it, nor that he should be willing to sacrifice the ordinary comforts of life in his devotion to a pursuit, which must be a happy one, because it requires the full and constant exertion of all his powers; and in which, if he need anything more than his own feeling to sustain him under his various difficulties and disappointments, he is sure to be followed, sooner or later, by the general applause of the world. But in truth he needs nothing more than the glowing inspiration within; though many,—wise persons too,—would be as sorely puzzled to understand this self-supporting principle, as the Mississippi boatmen were to comprehend the miracle of Wilson's supporting life without whiskey.

In the original constitution of things it is wisely ordered, that happiness shall be found every where about us. We do not need to have a rock smitten, to supply this thirst of the soul; it is not a distant good; it exists in every thing above, around us, and beneath our feet; and all we want is an eye to discern, and a heart to feel it. Let any one fix his attention on a moral truth, and it spreads out and enlarges its dimensions beneath his view, till what seemed at first as barren a proposition as words could express, appears like an interesting and glorious truth, momentous in its bearing on the destinies of men. And

so it is with every material thing ; let the mind be intently fixed upon it, and hold it in the light of science, and it gradually unfolds new wonders. The flower grows even more beautiful, than when it first opened its golden urn and breathed its incense on the morning air ; the tree, which was before thought of only as a thing to be cut down and cast into the fire, becomes majestic, as it holds its broad shield before the summer sun, or when it stands like a ship, with its sails furled, and all made fast about it, in preparation for the winter storm. All things in nature inspire in us a new feeling, and we begin to consider their fate and fortunes, their birth and decay, as resembling those of man. The truth is, that ignorance and indifference are almost the same, and we are sure to grow interested as fast as our knowledge extends, in any subject whatever. This explains how men of great ability are so engaged in what are often ignorantly regarded as little things ; how they can watch with the gaze of a lover, to catch the glance of the small bird's wing, or listen to its song, as if it were the breath of a soul ; how the world and every thing in it looks so spiritually bright to them, when to others the bird is but a flying animal, and the flower only the covering of a clod. It explains many things, which are perfect mysteries to vulgar minds. For example, Wilson tells a friend in one of his letters, that he sat down one evening to draw a mouse, and all the while the pantings of its little heart showed it to be in an agony of fear. He had intended to kill it, but happening to spill a few drops of water where it was tied, it lapped them up eagerly, and looked up in his face with such an expression of supplicating terror, that it overcame his resolution, and he let it go. Here, we think we hear some voice exclaiming, 'the man was a fool ;' but we recommend to the speaker to wait awhile, seeing there may be different opinions respecting the party to which that generic name belongs.

A devoted attachment like this to the works of nature, is an evidence of delicacy and refinement ; and we have cited this incident to show that the common prejudice, which regards it as inconsistent with energy of thought and action, is entirely unfounded ; for assuredly, the radiant files of war can show no spirits more resolute than those of the men, who leave the abodes of civilized life, launch their canoes on unbroken waters, depend on their rifle for subsistence, keep on their solitary march till the bird has sung his evening hymn, and have

no society at night but the beating sound of their fire. Neither is it inconsistent with a strict regard to all the duties of life; on the contrary, it is the part of duty to draw happiness from these sources, which, in all the changes and misfortunes of life, will never cease to flow. The poet Gray, one of the most intellectual and fastidious of men, says, 'happy they who can create a rose-tree, or erect a honey-suckle; who can watch the brood of a hen, or a fleet of their own ducklings as they sail upon the water.' The words are true as inspiration, and we recommend them to our readers, of whom a due proportion no doubt are miserable. They will learn from them, what is of great importance to know in such calculations,—that their unhappiness is owing, not to the want of pleasures, but to their not understanding how to select and enjoy those which they possess, or we may say those which all possess, since they are given freely and impartially to all, so *that* no avarice can monopolize them and no oppression take them away. This being the case, those who point out to us the extent and variety of such resources, and show by their own example how full, rich, and inspiring they are, deserve to be recorded among the benefactors of mankind. No greater treasures can be offered to human desire than enjoyments like these, which at once exercise the mind and improve the heart, repel the influence of sordid passions, and encourage the suggestions of humanity, virtue, and religion. Men do well to secure them, even if, in order to do it, they must sacrifice some other objects of ambition; for their drafts upon the applause of future ages may be dishonored, and disappoint them of renown. The gold which they have collected, perhaps by such means that they had better drunk it melted from the crucible, may fall from their grasp as the fires consume and the floods drown; but these pleasures are always within their reach; they do not lose their charm in the hours of anxiety and sorrow; and those who possess them have the satisfaction of knowing, that they will last as long as the soul.

But we have little hope of convincing men of the truth of these things; it is less hopeless to undertake to show them what is for the interest of others, than what is for their own. We can therefore state with confidence to the rich, that it would be much for the interest of their children,—of the society in which they live, and of science and literature in general, if they would buy this work with its magnificent illustrations.

We are not so visionary as to expect that they will all read it themselves; wealth and taste do not invariably go together. We recommend it as a favor to others, and at the same time would suggest, that such acts of munificence come with much more grace from the living hand than from the last will; for men are seldom grateful to those who do not give till they can keep no longer. They ascribe whatever they receive in this way to the charity of death, and not of the dead. When a man has given up other employments and other prospects, to devote himself to a pursuit like this; when he has spent days of toil and nights of danger to accomplish a purpose, which he feels entitles him to encouragement and applause, it is not refreshing to be told, that he may spread out his treasures on the pages of a magazine, for the recompense of a dollar an acre; or that he may have the privilege of publishing, if he will advance a few thousands. He has no resource in such a case, except to give up the favorite wish and long devotion of his heart and life, or to range through the United States, as Wilson did, to find two hundred subscribers among ten million people;—an employment hopeless and humiliating enough, to break a tin pedlar's heart. The great work of Mr. Audubon is such an one, as could not probably under any circumstances have been published in this country, and we rejoice that he was so kindly encouraged and welcomed in the home of our fathers. But since much talent is likely to be turned in this direction, of which the benefits may be lost for want of just rewards, we wish it were possible to hold out inducements large enough to satisfy reasonable expectations, and to reflect honor on our great and growing country. We regret to see that Mr. Nuttall, in his valuable work on the birds of the United States, which will demand a more extended notice when it is completed, was compelled to restrict himself in the number of his illustrations by the expense of obtaining them, fearing lest an increased price of the work would interfere with its circulation. We hope that no apprehension of this kind will prevent his giving colored illustrations of every subject he describes, in the larger work, which he proposes to publish at a future time. Without being very costly or elegant, they may be exact enough to answer the purpose of the reader, if not to satisfy the delicate taste of the connoisseur. Not one in a hundred of those who are really interested in these subjects, know a bird, an insect, or a flower, by its scientific distinctions; and a work of the kind

must be suited to all who have any taste for the study, as well as those who aim at a thorough knowledge of it, or it can have no great circulation in a country like ours.

It is surprising to see how few of all the birds which annually visit us, are known by name, and how little their habits are understood. Most natives of New England are acquainted with the bluejay, one of the earliest of our visitors, who comes sounding his penny trumpet as a herald of the spring, and either amuses himself by playing pranks upon other more serious birds, or entertains them by acting, to the life, the part of an angry Frenchman. Every miller and vagrant fisherman knows the belted kingfisher, who sits for hours upon his favorite dead branch, looking with his calm, bright eye, to the lowest depth of the waters. The robin, also, makes himself welcome, not only by the tradition of the kindness shown by his European relation to the children in the wood, but by his hearty whistle, lifted up as if he knew that all would be thankful to hear that the winter is over and gone, and his familiarity with man, whereby he shows his belief, that they who least deserve confidence, are sometimes made better by being trusted. The solemn crow, who is willing to repose the same confidence in man, taking only the additional precaution of keeping out of his reach,—the quizzical bobolink, or ricebunting, who tells man in so many words, that he cares nothing about him, not he,—the swallow, that takes his quarters in our barns, or the one that passes up and down our chimneys with a noise like thunder,—the purple martin, that offers to pay his house-rent by keeping insects from our gardens,—the snow-bird, that comes riding from the Arctic circle upon the winter storm,—and the baltimore, or golden-robin, that glances like a flame of fire through the green caverns of foliage,—will almost complete the list of those, which are familiarly known to man.

We say familiarly known, because there are many which people in general think they know, and which are yet sadly misrepresented. The farmer, for example, accuses the woodpecker of boring his trees, when he only enlarges with his bill the hole which the grub had made, and darting in his long arrowy tongue, puts a stop to its mining forever. Many a poor bird, in like manner, after having slain his thousands of insects which were laying waste the orchard and the garden, is sentenced to death as guilty of the very offences, which he has been laboriously preventing. There are few scenes in which justice is so

completely reversed, as when we see some idle young knave permitted to go forth with a fowling-piece, to murder creatures, of which it is not too much to say, that they have done more good in the world (it is a bold speech, we confess) than ever he will do evil, and applauded for his exploits by his old father, who, in rejoicing ignorance, congratulates himself on having a son so efficient and useful. We hear complaints annually from all parts of the United States, that some insect or another is destroying the fruit, and proposing to offer a large reward to any one who will discover a remedy. Lest we should be anticipated in our design, we would say that we mean to contend for that prize, and to secure the orchards and gardens by protecting the birds, and offering a handsome bounty for the ears of those who shoot them. Kalm tells us, that the planters in Virginia succeeded at last by legislative enactment, in exterminating the little crow, and exulted much on the occasion. But it was not long, before their triumph was changed to mourning. They found that the acts had been passed for the benefit of insects, not their own, and they would gladly have offered a larger bounty to bring back the persecuted birds. We shall not plead for the crow, who is fully able to take care of himself; but we must file a protest against the practice of destroying the birds of the garden, for, besides depriving us of the beauty of their appearance and the music of their song, it lets in a flood of insects, whose numbers the birds were commissioned to keep down; and when we find this evil growing year by year, as most assuredly it will, there will be little consolation in reflecting, that we have brought it upon ourselves.

The song of birds is not much better known, than their habits and persons. We have been assured by several individuals, that they have heard the mocking-bird in Massachusetts; and in some instances, we thought it probable from their description that they were correct, though this bird is seldom found in so high a latitude; but in other cases, we were convinced that they had been listening to the performance of the cat-bird. Most persons would as soon expect to hear the cat herself uplifting her voice in melody; but the powers of this bird are by no means confined to the mew and squeal. Though sadly afraid of man, and with sufficient reason, he is a fine singer, a great wag, and in mimicry is not far inferior to the mocking-bird; but he has so little peace of mind, that he seldom dares to let us know where he is by his note, till after the fall of evening

or before the dawn. We venture to predict, that in the month of May, strangers will hear from the windows of the Tremont House, a delicious note, that seems to proceed from some singing leaf of the topmost tree in that mall, which bore the once distinguished name of Paddock,—a hero, who has almost perished from the traditions of narrative old age. He will hear it, rising high above the hackman's whistle and the rattling wheel. Few will be able to tell him more, than that the sound proceeds from a bird; while the warbler, and his brother of the red eye, will sing on, in happy indifference both to the attention and neglect of man. But their favors will not be confined to the city: they will be heard in the country, from the broad arm of the elm that overhangs the cottage door, singing on, at morning, noon and night, with a taste and science that fill other listening birds with admiration and despair. There is another bird, well known by the name of the brown thrasher, whose musical talent is but little understood. It is said that he is called the French mocking-bird at the South, and we have heard that name given to him here, not on account of his imitations, but the extent and variety of his powers. He has no ambition to display himself to the sight of man, but he excites the astonishment of all who hear him, by the luxurious fulness of his song. How many have ever seen the crimson linnet, as he sits playing the flute on the very summit of the loftiest tree, sometimes sinking his strain almost to silence, then pouring it out in bursts of rapture? It is common to say, that beauty of plumage and sweetness of song are not found together. It may be true, that they are seldom united in the highest perfection; but every child knows, that the clear piping of the baltimore and the varied whistle of the goldfinch, are as pleasant to the ear, as their fine colors are to the eye; and the brilliant redbird, which sometimes visits New England, is not more distinguished for the bright scarlet of his dress, than for the sweet and bold expression of his song.

There is so much that inspires curiosity about the various tribes of birds, that it is difficult to account for this contented ignorance of their ways, in which so many spend their lives. When the snows retreat to the mountains, the friendly voice of the robin, telling us that he is glad to see us all again, has a magical effect upon every one; it calls the heart and memory into action, and reminds us of all we love to remember. Here he is again, but he cannot tell us where he has been; what regions

he has traversed, nor what invisible hand pointed out his path in the sky. If this inquiry interest us, we begin to look about us in the closing year; we see, that when the leaf grows red, the birds are disappearing,—some assembling in solemn deliberation, to make arrangements for the purpose; others taking French leave, as it is unfitly called, without ceremony or farewell. Some, like the great white owl, delight in the prospect of moonlight gleaming on the snowy plains of the north, where all is still as death; others, like the snowbunting, rejoice to accompany the storm, as it rushes down from the frozen lakes and oceans. But most birds secure a mild climate and perpetual verdure, by retreating from the wintry tempest with a fleetness greater than its own. Some, like the sagacious crow and the light swallow, which was formerly thought to drown itself by way of escaping the winter, fly only by day; while others, like travellers in the desert, rest by day and go on their way by night. It is curious to observe the order in which some arrange themselves. The wild-geese, for example, whose word of command we so often hear above us in the stillness of night, form two files, which meet in a sharp angle at the head, where the leader cleaves the air and guides the course of the procession, giving up his place when he is weary, to the next in order. All similar caravans move on with a regularity and precision, that do them infinite honor. If they can secure a favorable wind, they consider it an advantage; but if not, they *beat* and *tack* so as to overcome its resistance as well as they can. They make every thing subordinate to the great business of migration;—the swallow snatches the insect and the kingfisher his fish, without suspending their flight; and if they are late in their journey, they allow themselves no rest till they reach their destination. Hard times these for birds of large size and little wings; on they must go,—and partly by trudging, and partly by swimming, they relieve the hardship of flying, and contrive to reach a place of safety and rest. It seems at first like a prodigious undertaking, for a bird to pass from Hudson's Bay to Mexico or South America; but as some of them can fly at the rate of sixty miles an hour, and more with a favorable wind, the journey is soon over, and the shelter they gain well worth the toil of reaching it. We wonder not that they should go: we are rather tempted to say to some poor goldfinch, which we occasionally see pale and starving in the dead of winter, as Dr. Johnson did to the crow in Scotland, 'What! have wings, and

stay here !' We know not that birds have much imagination themselves, but they certainly inspire it in others ; witness the wish which Logan sang, and a thousand hearts have echoed,—to travel and return with the bird in the heavens, which knoweth its appointed time, a perpetual companion of the spring.

It is well worth while, also, to observe the provision which birds make for their own wants, and to see how, when reason sometimes falters, instinct always operates with the same certainty and success. We have already mentioned the woodpecker, who grasps the trunk of a tree with his claws, and stands upon his tail, drawing out insects from their burrows in the wood. It is said, that he goes to an ant's nest and lies down pretending to be dead, with his tongue out, drawing it in, however, as often as it is covered with the ants, which are a favorite article of his food. The nuthatch opens nuts, or the stones of fruit, by repeated blows of his sharp, horny bill. The butcher-bird, which lives on insects and smaller birds, is said to attract the latter by imitating their call, and has also a habit of impaling upon thorns such insects as he does not need at the moment. Some have thought this a trap set for other birds ; but this is improbable, because unnecessary. It seems more likely that this trick of gathering what he does not want, and keeping it till it is of no use to him, is one which he has learned in his intercourse with man. The whippoorwill sits upon the fence or the step of a door, singing mournfully, as if he had lost all his friends ; but woe to the moth, who believes in the mourner's having lost his appetite also ; the bird seizes and swallows him, without any suspension of his song. The raven and the gull, who are fond of shell-fish, but are not provided with instruments to open them, carry them high into the air, and let them fall on rocks, in order to break the shell. In this way it is said that a philosopher's head was broken in ancient times, being accidentally mistaken for a stone ; whether this be true or not, we cannot say ; the heads of sages are harder now. The bald eagle, proud and disdainful as he seems, gets a great part of his living in a manner that does more credit to his ingenuity and strength, than to his morals. He sits in gigantic repose, calmly watching the play of the fishing-birds over the blue reach of waters, with his wings loosely raised, as if keeping time with the heaving sea. Soon he sees the fishhawk dive heavily in the ocean and re-appear with a scream of triumph, bearing the sluggish fish. Then the gaze of the eagle grows

fiery and intense ; his wings are spread wide, and he gives chase to the hawk, till he compels him to let fall his prize : but it is not lost, for the eagle wheels in a broad circle, sweeps down upon the edge of the wave, and secures it before it touches the water. Nothing can be more majestic, than the flight of this noble bird ; he seems to move by an effort of will alone, without the waving of his wings. Pity it is, that he should dishonor himself by such unworthy robbery as this,—though it by no means destroys the resemblance between the king of birds and the kings of men.

The art which birds display in their nests deserves admiration. We are in the habit of speaking of the nest as the home of the bird ; but it is nothing more than the cradle of the young. Birds of mature years are exposed to all the elements, but are provided with oil to spread upon their plumage, which enables it to shed the rain. This supply ceases in a measure, when birds are sheltered by the care of man ; while the small bird is dry and active through all the heaviest showers, the wet human being does not look more sorrowful, than the drowned and draggling hen. The nest of the humming-bird, that little creature, so beautiful, and like most other beauties, so deficient in temper, is the choicest piece of work than can be imagined ; being formed and covered with moss, in such a manner as to resemble exactly a knot of the limb on which it is built. But this is exceeded by the little tailor-bird of India, which, living in a climate where the young are exposed to all manner of foes, constructs its nest by sewing together two large leaves of a tree at the very extremity of the limb, where neither ape, serpent, nor monkey, would venture for all beneath the moon. It uses its bill for an awl, and fibres for threads, and thus unites them in a workmanlike manner, placing its nest between, lined with gossamer, feathers, and down. We can see something resembling this in the nest of the baltimore-oriole, which is so common in our gardens in summer. It is formed by tying together some forked twigs at the extremity of a limb, with strings either stripped from vegetables, or, if more convenient, stolen from a graft or a window. These twigs form a frame-work, round which they weave a coarse covering to enclose the nest, composed of thread, wool, or tow. The inner nest is at the bottom of this external pocket, where it swings securely in the highest wind, and is sheltered by the arbor of leaves above it, both from the rain and sun. This intelligent bird was not slow to

discover, that much trouble might be saved by employing strings which have been already prepared by the hands of man ; and if skeins of thread or any thing of the kind come in his way, he makes use of them without asking to whom they belong. This is the most remarkable structure of the kind in our country ; but if we may believe the accounts of others, a bird in India makes a similar nest, with several apartments, which it lights up with fire-flies by night.

There are birds, which construct their nests with less delicacy, but more hard labor ; the woodpecker, for example, which chisels out its gallery in the trunks or limbs of trees, and thus prepares a lodging, not only for itself, but for the nuthatch, black cap titmouse, and other birds, which take advantage of the woodpecker's deserted mansions. The kingfisher chooses a bank near the scene of his labors ; and here, with his mate, works with his bill and claws,—rather ineffective tools for the purpose,—till he has scooped out a tunnel of the depth of several feet horizontally. The extreme part is spacious and ovenlike, but the entrance is only large enough for one. This bird does not waste its labor, like many others, but makes the same cavern answer its purpose for a number of years. The little sand-martin follows the kingfisher's example. The purple martin and the republican swallow, which is now emigrating to us from the West, defend their habitations with a mud wall. The golden-crowned thrush makes its nest in the ground, diffusing it so as to resemble the turf around it. But some birds show great indifference to this subject, from whom it would least be expected ; as the hen, which merely scratches a place for its nest, though it is afterwards so attentive to its young. The sea-birds, in general rough and hardy in their habits, leave their eggs lying loosely on the sand. The duck, however, the eider particularly, which is one of our northern visitors, is so motherly in its habits, as to strip the down from its own breast, to line the nest for its young. In the northern regions, where they breed, the natives plunder the nest ; the bird again lines its habitation, and again it is plundered. Many an individual in civilized countries feathers his nest at the expense of the poor eider, who is thus a martyr to her maternal affection.

Most birds make their nests in an honest and industrious way ; but there is a knavish crew, which, for reasons which we cannot fathom, are permitted to save themselves the trouble, both of providing lodging and education for their young, by

imposing the burden upon others. In foreign countries, the cuckoo is guilty of this unnatural proceeding, which combines the sins of desertion and imposture. The reproach is of course transferred to our American bird of that name ; but our yellow-billed cuckoo is very motherly in its habits and feelings. It is true that its eggs have been found in the nests of other birds, but a distinguished naturalist conjectures that its intention was to steal the nest, and not to leave its young to the care of others. The worst thing known of our cuckoo is, that it feeds upon the eggs of other birds. The unnatural parent in this country, is the well known low blackbird, the pest of almost all the feathered race. She lays her egg in the nests of various other birds, without much concern in the selection, and seems fully conscious, that she is acting a disgraceful part. If the owner of the nest have any eggs of her own, she takes care of the strange one, rather than desert them ; if not, she generally gives up the work she has finished with the sweat of her brow. Sometimes the birds throw out the egg that has no business there ; sometimes they lay a new floor to the nest ; but in many cases, affection for their own induces them to submit with a good grace to the imposition. When the young foundling is hatched, the quarters are so small for him, that he often stifles the other young birds, merely from want of room. He retreats the moment he is able to fly, as if conscious that he has no right to his home. This reproach should be given to the real sinner, and not to the cuckoo ; for the latter bird does actually patch up something, which, considering that it is honestly made, may be dignified with the name of nest.

Birds, like men, are apt to regard each other as lawful prey ; which renders various provisions of nature necessary to secure the weak against the strong. The structure of the eye gives an advantage to the cannibal, as well as to his victim. It is suited in a wonderful manner to the wants of the animal, and to the element in which it lives. It has an apparatus, by which the bird can push it out and draw it in, thus extending or lessening the sphere of vision at pleasure ; the nictitating membrane covers it with a partially opaque curtain, when it would reduce the light without closing the lid ; the nerve is quick in its sensibility to every impression, and birds are thus enabled either to pick up insects close before them, or to look abroad over miles of earth and sea. The fishhawk sees the fish at an immense distance beneath it ; and others of the same race

discern their prey on the ground or flying, when an object so small would be wholly invisible to the human eye. Under these circumstances, the smaller birds sometimes borrow resolution from despair. The graceful little kingbird, whose military habits are signified by the red plume which he sometimes displays, will attack the largest tyrant of the air, and not only crows, but hawks and eagles retreat from him with an expedition, which signifies that they have gained neither profit nor honor in the encounter. When the smaller birds think it unwise to do battle, they retire under hedges and brush-wood, and the hawk looks after them, as British frigates did after the little Greek pirate boats, sorely puzzled to tell whether they had passed into the earth or air, while they were quietly sunk along the shore, ready to float again as soon as the danger was past. When this cannot be conveniently done, they sometimes rush out to meet the bird of prey in great numbers, and by flying about him in all directions, attempting to get above him, and setting up a general outcry, they bewilder his brain,—never very bright,—in such a manner, that he is compelled to retreat, in order to collect his scattered wits. When they have no other resort, they sometimes put themselves under the protection of man, but they consider this a choice of evils, and to be done only in desperate cases. Nature has provided for the security of some, which have not ingenuity to defend themselves. Some are made to resemble the tree so closely, as to escape unpleasant observation; some find the same security in their likeness to earth and stones. Many of our readers have doubtless met the quail, with her thriving family of children, in their rambles through the woods. If they are so well aware of the artifices of the mother, as not to regard her pretence of lameness, they may attempt to secure the young; but fortunate and sharp-sighted must they be to discover them, such is their resemblance to the dried leaves in which they nestle. The young of the whippoorwill, also, seem aware of this advantage, and retain great composure in danger, trusting that they shall not be distinguished from the ground. It is this fear, so necessary to their defence, which makes birds so reserved in their intercourse with men, that their characters are but little understood. The crow, for example, never acts himself till he is tamed and made familiar with man. In his wild state, he is eminently suspicious; let him see but a string near the corn-field, and he imagines it a snare; let any one attempt to approach him with

a gun, and he keeps at a respectful distance, while he manifests no fear of an unarmed man. When domesticated, the grave and jealous wiseacre lays aside his solemnity, and becomes mischievous as a monkey, showing in his tricks astonishing sagacity, in selecting both subject and occasion. Most birds can be tamed; but man has not a good reputation among them in general; and it is not easy to quiet their fears, lest he shall abuse his power.

The voice is the power for which birds are most remarkable, and this depends very much upon the quickness of their hearing, in which they excel most other animals. The lungs bear a very large proportion to the frame, which is so constructed as to receive great admissions of air, which aids the energy of sound. The distance at which the soaring birds can be heard, is almost incredible. The cry of the eagle will reach us from his most towering height, and the wild scream of the sea-bird rises above the thunder of the beach. The variety of their tones is not less surprising; the common barn-door fowl is an example; its tones are ludicrously *human*, running through all changes expressive of passion, but most eloquent in discontent, anxiety, sorrow, and despair. But the smaller birds are those, which fill the garden and the wood with their spiritlike song. Their strains are poured forth to swell that stream of blended melodies, which form the voice of spring; a voice full of pleasing and tender associations, which comes upon the ear, reminding us of all most dear to remembrance, and often fills the soul with happiness and the eyes with tears. No country can exceed our own in this music of nature; the European nightingale has been long regarded as unrivalled, but now it is conceded that its strain owes something of its charm to the hour when it is heard, when the sounds of the day are over, and all around is listening, breathless, and still. But our mocking-bird, so unworthily named, since he introduces snatches of songs of other birds into his voluntary, not from poverty of invention, but in wantonness, and to show how his own surpasses them all, is rather an enthusiast than an imitator; as any one may know who has seen him at his matins, with every nerve in motion trembling with delight, and resembling St. Ignatius, who, as Maffei tells us, was often lifted several feet from the ground, by the intenseness and spirituality of his devotions. These fine powers of song, however, are not confined to one or two birds; where the mocking-bird is never heard, there are

strains not so various and striking perhaps, but equally plaintive, original, and sweet.

Every one hears the voice of the bird with interest and pleasure, and any explanation of the habits and history of the wild and retiring musician, will be generally welcome. For reasons which will easily suggest themselves to the reader, no general attention has been hitherto given to the subject. The heavy works in which information can be found, have been treasured in expensive libraries only, where they are out of the reach of the great proportion of those who are most interested in these things. But a few such men as Audubon will soon place the results of their adventurous travels, where men shall see and know them; a taste for their favorite sciences will gradually be created, and they will be sure of the general applause. But we hope that the melancholy line, 'Sic vos non vobis nidificatis aves!' will not apply to them as truly as it does to many of their favorite race. Those who have labored and suffered in the cause of science, are entitled to something more substantial than golden opinions; for if fame be a reward, it is one for which they are indebted to themselves, and not to others.

The most celebrated adventurer in this charming pursuit was Alexander Wilson; a name not sufficiently known when fame would have been of use to him, but now surrounded with many interesting associations. He was, till the 18th year of his age, apprentice to a weaver; but he never seemed to regard his trade as an employment at all sedentary, and he was in the constant habit of making pilgrimages through his native land, Scotland, in the capacity of a pedler, displaying at the same time an indifference to profit, and a passion for poetry, not often found in that estimable race. This latter propensity was encouraged by the success of Burns, with whom he was personally acquainted; but Wilson, when he attempted to publish his inspirations, met with no good fortune, except once, when compelled to burn, with his own hands, at the town cross, a satire, which he had written upon some individual, by whom he thought the weavers had been oppressed, upon which occasion he was cheered by the multitude as a patriot and a martyr. We can hardly account for his entire failure in his poetical attempts; one would have supposed, that with a glowing imagination, a quick and delicate sensibility, a melancholy and sometimes majestic tone of thought, and a perseverance untir-

ing as an eagle's wing, he must have become distinguished in an art, where many have secured eminence without half his powers. But so it was, that he might as well have attempted to weave the visions of his fancy in the tapestry of a Paisley loom, as express them in such numbers as those which he gave triumphantly to the world, and which the world, fortunately for science, rejected.

Wilson came to this country in 1794, so forlorn in circumstances, that he slept upon deck through the whole voyage, and when he arrived, had no property but a fowling-piece. He landed at Newcastle, and as he was walking to Philadelphia, shot a redheaded woodpecker. It is said that he often mentioned afterwards, what delight the sight of this beautiful bird gave him; and as this was a time when he was naturally full of excitement, the incident probably had much effect in determining his mind to that pursuit, which resulted in his becoming the historian of the feathered race. After a few years of depression, variegated by an occasional change from the employment of schoolmaster to that of pedler, he found a resting-place on the banks of the Schuylkill; the same region which afterwards inspired Audubon with taste and enthusiasm similar to his own. Here he was fortunate enough to find friends, who, though they dared not encourage him in a pursuit, where the sacrifices were likely to be great, and the substantial rewards very few, seem, nevertheless, to have sympathized with him, and to have believed as he did, that the volume of nature deserved to be read, as well as the day-book and ledger. This was precisely the encouragement, which his energetic spirit wanted; his plans were already rough-hewn in his own imagination; and once assured that his object was properly estimated by others whose judgment he valued, he knew how to make minor difficulties give way before him. He applied himself earnestly to the study of natural history, in the intervals of his labor as a teacher, and made various attempts at delineating birds, but so unsuccessfully, that for a long time the sight of them filled him with indignation and despair. Still he persevered, wisely resolving to make that preparation for his rambles, without which his labor would be thrown away. He went on foot to Niagara in 1805, and on his return, we find him with a spirit undaunted, but a fortune considerably less than a dollar, expressing a manly confidence that he had the resources which his enterprise required,—a constitution, which hardship only strengthened,—a heart,

unchained by domestic affections,—a disposition, equally satisfied with a comfortable bed, or an Indian fire, in the heart of the woods;—and above all, a resolution, which no failure could depress and no obstacle withstand. He made engagements with a bookseller in Philadelphia, who was to advance the funds required for an edition of two hundred copies, while Wilson was to furnish the drawings and descriptions, receiving meantime a small sum for coloring the plates, which formed his only support. He thought it necessary to make a commencement of his work, in order that he might use it to gain subscribers, while wandering through the country to collect materials for his future numbers.

In 1808, he went forth, directing his steps eastward; and arranged his outposts and spies in such a manner, that he expressed his confidence, that not a wren could travel from York to Canada, without his receiving immediate information. But subscribers did not abound, and the whole number he was able to collect amounted only to forty-one, while the drudgery of making his proposals again and again, only to hear them rejected, was extremely grating to a spirit like his, melancholy and somewhat proud. So little was his object appreciated, that in Haverhill, New Hampshire, he was apprehended as a spy, the inhabitants supposing that some foreign power had fallen in love with their paradise, and was preparing plans for an invasion. When he returned from the East, after resting but a day or two, he made a tour through the Southern States, and succeeded in adding one hundred and twenty-five to his subscription list, beside gaining subjects for his pencil from the cypress swamps and pine savannas. All his remarks upon men and manners, are those of a sharp, thoughtful, and rather sad observer; but in a third tour, where his route led him through the vast Western regions of our country, which he visited before the steam-boat had supplanted the ark and the bush-whacker upon the rivers, thus removing solitude and extending civilization, by crowding the work of a hundred years into ten, he seems to travel with a lighter step and heart, as if he had learned distrust from those subjects of his art, that spread their wings and fly from the presence of man. But he did not escape mortifications even there; a certain judge told him that his book, being out of the *reach of the commonalty*, was anti-republican, and ought not to be encouraged. Wilson asked him, what he thought of his own handsome three-story house?

—whether such buildings were within the reach of the *commonalty*, as he called them?—a question, to which it is not stated, that the bench made any satisfactory reply. He evidently felt such coarse remarks, much more than the serious difficulties and hardships of his way. In fact he held those labors very light; and there is, to our apprehension, something grand and striking, in the thought of a man going forth alone, in the strength of his own heart, with none to share his trials, or even understand his feelings,—seeing what others could not see,—hearing what others could not hear,—bearing gallantly onward, like a light vessel over the unsounded seas, while all who crowd the shore as it departs, prophecy that it was ‘built in the eclipse,’ and they never shall see it again.

Lest we be taken for enthusiasts, which would be fatal to our reputation as reviewers, we would say, that it is not every great naturalist, who makes a sublime and affecting impression; witness Mr. Audubon's picturesque account of his visit from M. de T——, a blank which some readers will probably be able to fill. One day, when walking by the river, he saw an individual land from a boat with a bunch of hay upon his back, who seemed to occasion some speculation among the boatmen. The stranger inquired for Mr. Audubon, and learning that he was the person, gave him a letter of introduction from a friend, which began, ‘I send you an odd fish, which I hope you will describe.’ Mr. Audubon read the letter aloud, and asked him ‘*where it was?*’ The stranger rubbing his hands with much glee, replied, ‘I am the odd fish, I presume, Sir.’ After such an apology as was forthcoming, Mr. Audubon offered to send for his baggage, but was saved the trouble by M. de T——'s informing him that he had none, save the cargo of weeds upon his back. When introduced to the ladies, he thought it necessary to improve his appearance, and accordingly pulling off his shoes, began to draw down his stockings to hide the holes about the heels, remarking that his dress had suffered a little in his journey. It consisted of a long loose coat of yellow nankeen, which had been stained into a resemblance to that of Joseph's, by the juice of various plants and flowers,—a waistcoat of the same, with unfathomable pockets, and buttoned up to the chin, covering a large portion of his tight pantaloons,—the whole raiment surmounted by long hair and a beard, which were left to the care of nature. The spectre conversed in a very intelligent and agreeable manner, but was impatient

to see Mr. Audubon's drawings of birds and flowers. On looking at one of the latter, he shook his head, and declared that there was no such plant. Mr. Audubon at once silenced his doubts by taking him to the spot where it grew, upon seeing which, he danced and shouted in ecstasy, declaring that he had found not only a new species but a new genus, and appearing as if he could have died happy. At midnight a great uproar was heard in the naturalist's apartment, and Mr. Audubon running thither in alarm, found him racing round the room with the handle of a violin in his hand, having already demolished the body of it in attempts to beat down some bats, nothing regarding his own want of drapery, nor the destruction he was making. Having secured one of the intruders for his collection, he retired to bed with singular satisfaction. After remaining an inmate in the family for three weeks, he suddenly disappeared, and they could only account for his absence by supposing that he had himself been taken and secured as a specimen, till a letter of thanks from him came to hand some time after. Mr. Audubon seems to have taken vengeance on the naturalist for the destruction of his fiddle and the various other inconveniences he had occasioned, by showing him the interior of a cane-brake, where they encountered a bear who was upon the same expedition, and were overtaken by a thunder-storm, which made the man of science for once forget his enthusiasm in his fears. We can forgive this, inasmuch as the jest was in the way of their profession; but we feel bound to declare our entire disapprobation of his proceeding, in exposing a fellow-traveller to the wrath of a pole-cat. This gentleman, struck with the beauty of the animal, dismounted in order to secure it; but was soon convinced, that because the creature was pleasing to one sense, it did not follow that he should be equally acceptable to another. We should as soon have thought of exposing a human being to the attacks of a party newspaper, on the eve of a presidential election. How far this unsavory jest was carried, we are not precisely informed; but, though reviewers by profession, we can see no sport in the suffering of our fellow-creatures, and we undertake to assure Mr. Audubon, that the least play of such humor is extremely offensive.

But to return to Wilson. When Mr. Audubon resided in Louisville, Wilson came into his counting-room one morning, with the two numbers of his work then published, and offered

his proposals. Mr. Audubon describes his appearance as rendered striking by the keenness of his eyes, and the prominence of his cheek bones; and his peculiarities of look were probably heightened by an expression of surprise, at finding another person engaged at the moment in a pursuit similar to his own. As Mr. Audubon was about to write his name as a subscriber, his partner advised him rather abruptly to forbear, assuring him in French, that his own drawings were superior to those of Wilson, and that his acquaintance with the habits of birds could not be less; this advice prevailed, and he declined subscribing. Mr. Audubon observes, that Wilson did not appear pleased, either because he understood the language in which the remark was made, or because he was disappointed in the hope of adding to his list. He probably did not understand French, but the language of manner is the same all the world over. It requires but little study to discover the meaning of expressions of light esteem; and beside this, a man who has given his life and heart to the accomplishment of an object, believing that he has no rival, must be somewhat more than human, if he be delighted to find that another is engaged in the same purpose, with equal energy and advantages far greater than his own. They, however, compared notes in a friendly manner, and ranged the woods together; Mr. Audubon introduced him to his family, and did all in his power to make his visit pleasant, but he seemed oppressed by constant melancholy, which was only relieved by the Scotch airs, which he played sweetly on his flute, social enjoyments having for him no charm nor attraction. Mr. Audubon offered him his own drawings for the *American Ornithology*, only stipulating that they should bear his own name; but Wilson did not accept the proposal. Mr. Audubon afterwards waited upon him in Philadelphia, and was kindly received, but nothing was said of the subject which was nearest to their hearts. When the ninth number of the *Ornithology* was published, Mr. Audubon was surprised and not particularly delighted, to find a note from Wilson's journal, dated March 23d, 1810, in which he remarks, that in Louisville, he received no attention, and gained neither new subscriber nor new bird. 'Science and literature,' said he, 'have not one friend in the place.'

Mr. Audubon relates these circumstances with a tone which does him honor; without making complaints of Wilson, who certainly appears at disadvantage, and without losing his respect

for the talent and enterprise of a very remarkable man. He had a right to justify himself, and this is all he attempts in his explanation. The note was probably written in a moment of disappointment and depression, and was an exact description of the writer's feelings. We can do more justice to both, if we remember that neither party was then known to the world. If we think of Wilson at the time, as one whose acquaintance was thought an honor, or whose genius was respected as it now is, we shall widely mistake his condition. He was a man of plain appearance, of manners not prepossessing to strangers, engaged in a pursuit which not one in ten thousand knew how to appreciate, and which indeed owes its fame in our country principally to his exertions. His features were rather coarse, and his dress better suited to the forest than the drawing-room; moreover he carried with him a subscription list, and was thus connected with a class of visitors, which no man welcomes to his house with rapture. Under these circumstances, though we have no doubt that Mr. Audubon treated him with kind attention and felt respect for his enthusiasm, still it required a prophet's eye to discover his full claims, and to assign him that high place, which, as a man of genius, he felt he had a right to demand. All who knew Wilson unanimously testify, that, although irritable, and unable to endure the least disrespect, his disposition was remarkably kind, liberal and just. In all his dealings with others, he was the very soul of honor; so that he was doubtless misled by feelings of despondency, which often attach unpleasant associations in an unjust and unaccountable manner, to places and persons which by no means deserve them. We observe that the *American Quarterly Review*, in noticing the work before us, justifies Philadelphia from an implied censure cast upon it by Mr. Audubon. He says that Liverpool freely accorded to him honors, which, on application made by his friends, Philadelphia had refused him. We do not profess to understand the allusion. That city is the last to deserve a charge of want of hospitality, and Mr. Audubon is evidently not the man to make unreasonable complaints or demands. We think it probable, that he wrote thus from having accidentally connected depressing associations with a place, where he had hoped to publish his work, and where he found himself disappointed, and that it never occurred either to him or to Wilson, that in expressing their feelings, they were bringing grave charges against any place or people.

It does not seem probable to us, that if Wilson and Audubon had been acquainted with each other, more intimately and under more favorable circumstances, they would have been very well suited to each other. Those who agree in being devoted to a similar object, are generally said to have similarity of taste ; but this does not follow ; and where they are unlike in feeling, their pursuit of the same object is more likely to make them rivals than friends. Wilson was a man, whose powers were concentrated upon a single purpose ; he pursued it, not as an amusement, nor even an employment, but as the great object of his life, and with a deep and determined spirit, which few could understand. The subjects of his art and inquiry were not playthings to him, they were intimate and familiar friends ; their voice was not music, but language ; instead of dying away upon the ear, it went down into his soul. To him, the notes with which they heralded the spring were full of glory, and when in the autumn, they heard far off the trumpet of the storm, and sang their farewell to the woods, it was solemn and affecting, as if it were breathed from a living and beating heart. To others, this interest seemed senseless and excessive ; but he was one of those, who never smile at the depth and earnestness of their own emotions. When he described the birds, he spoke of their habits, and manners, as if they were intelligent things ; and thus has given a life and charm to his descriptions, which will make his work the chief attraction of the science in our country, for many years to come. But as might be supposed, this very enthusiasm, which was so strong that he kept it as much as possible to himself, thinking it would find no sympathy with those who never had felt it, has led him into many errors. He trusted too much to his imagination ; from what he saw he inferred much that he did not see, and therefore his successors have been constantly employed in correcting the mistakes of their master. Audubon entered upon the pursuit with an enthusiasm equally resolute, but much more light-hearted. It began in childhood, and as it grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength, it was more judicious and discriminating than if he had, late in life, turned the whole current of his feeling in this new direction. Beside this material difference, he was more fortunate than Wilson in having a family who sympathized with him, when other friends discouraged him and complained of the waste of his time and exertions. Being more a man of the world than Wilson, though without

losing the simplicity of his mind, we feel that he is less likely to be led away by his fancy, and therefore trust him as a safer guide, though not a more fascinating companion. But if he is less poetical than Wilson, he has much of the spirit of his predecessor. The very name which he has given to his work,—biography,—shows that he feels as if he were describing intelligent and spiritual things, and thus inspires a sort of Pythagorean interest, such as natural history is seldom fortunate enough to awaken. When he introduces a bird to our acquaintance, he is evidently solicitous to place its virtues and attractions in the most flattering light, as if he were speaking in favor of a friend. We need hardly say that his work is very engaging. The singleness of heart, which is always found connected with an enthusiastic love of nature, speaks volumes in favor of such men: and if it were not so, their various and amusing adventures, the wild aspects of the country which they describe, their escapes and dangers, their hardships and pleasures, all alike unknown to ordinary life, give to their writings a romantic charm.

Mr. Audubon was born in America, but was descended from a French family, and was sent early in life, to receive his education in France. This would be sufficiently evident from the peculiar style of his writings, which are fluent and eloquent, but carry evidence with them that they never proceeded from an English pen. It would seem that the direction in which he has been so successful, was given to his taste in early childhood; it must have been partly inherited; for the passion rose at a period earlier than he can remember, and he tells us that his father encouraged it, pointing out to him the graceful movement and beautiful forms of birds. There was no need, however, of fanning the flame; for, from the first, he was never happy when removed from the forests and fields, and his chief enjoyment was to find out the homes of the small birds in the green masses of foliage, or to follow the curlew and cormorant to the retreats where they sought shelter from the fury of the storm. To look upon their eggs in the downy nest, or on the burning sands, and to trace their history from the shell through all their migrations and changes, was then, as it is now, the favorite desire of his heart. It might seem a dangerous thing in a parent to encourage a taste which was already so strong, and which, if it became engrossing, threatened to interfere so much with the more practical pursuits of life. He probably was willing that his son should make this the business of his life, and ap-

pears to have taken judicious care to impress upon his child, that all the admiration and love which nature inspires, should remind us of Him who made it.

He was desirous of keeping these subjects of study always before him ; but he found no satisfaction in looking upon the stuffed birds of collections, which, like the Egyptian mummies, retain but a small portion of their living attractions. These would not answer ; and the beauties of their plumage seemed to him as perishable as sunset clouds, till his father, at the proper time, set before him a book of Illustrations. This awakened a new ambition, and he determined to rival, and if possible excel what he saw. But he was obliged to go through the usual discipline ; his first efforts seemed like caricatures ; and every new advance he made, rendered him discontented with what he had done before. It is a grievous thing to man to be compelled to laugh at his own productions, because he feels that another year's improvement may render his present efforts as ludicrous to himself as the former. But this is one of the evidences of real taste and talent. It shows that the standard of excellence in the artist's mind is set high, and this is an advantage both in youth and manhood ; for the moment one begins to be satisfied with his own productions, he shows that he has lost his enthusiastic desire to improve,—a desire which forms the inspiration of genius, and without which no one ever was great.

While receiving his education in France, from which country he returned at the age of seventeen, Mr. Audubon took lessons in drawing from David, which, though the subjects were not such as he would have chosen for himself, doubtless gave him an ease and freedom with the hand and eye, which he found of great advantage. He immediately commenced the great undertaking, which is now well known to the world. His father gave him an estate on the Schuylkill,—a residence well suited to his purpose, and here, he says, it was his constant practice to commence his rambles at daybreak, it being his happiness and triumph to return wet with dew, with the bird which was to ornament his page. Those who are acquainted with birds, know how much they are in the habit of following the course of rivers in their periodical journeys, and that a diligent observer, near one of our larger streams, will be likely to see nearly all the inland birds. But it was not enough for him to know their forms ; he wished to learn their history in every particular ;

and to gain this information, he undertook long and hazardous expeditions, being sometimes absent from his family for years, engaged in exploring prairies, mountains, lakes, and seas. We said, that he was from the beginning engaged in this undertaking; but we must not give the impression, that he had in view the publication before us; on the contrary, he assures us that he was led onward solely by the love of the pursuit, from which he derived constant gratification. His friends were as earnest as those of Job, to convince him that he was much to blame; and he confesses that any one who saw his habits, might have supposed him negligent of every domestic duty; but his wife and children, who were certainly most interested in his movements, did not join in the censure. They will now be rewarded for their forbearance, by enjoying the reflection of his fame.

How much he was in earnest in his rambles, appears from his account of a visit to Niagara, in which he has given a picture of himself, as life-like as any of his colored illustrations. He had been wandering near the lakes for months, and was returning with his drawings of plants and birds. The last vestige of his linen had long ago been devoted to the purpose of cleaning his gun; he was dressed like one of the poorest Indians; his beard covered his neck, and his hair flowed down his back; his leathern raiment was crying loudly for repair; a large knife hung at his side, and a worn-out blanket, containing his tin box of drawings, was buckled to his shoulders. In this guise he walked into the public house, and demanded breakfast, all present being amazed to hear from such a figure anything that denoted a resemblance to civilized man. The landlord seemed anxious to secure him as a lion, and he had in fact come for the sake of sketching the Fall; but he made a discovery which may well be published for the benefit of painters, viz;—that in a miniature picture of such a scene, no very impressive idea can be given of the extent or the sound. It would save many a painting, in which the falling ocean dwindles to a mill-dam.

The idea of making a collection for publication never suggested itself to Mr. Audubon, till he visited Philadelphia in 1824, on his way to the eastward through the Atlantic States. He was then a stranger to all but Dr. Mease, who introduced him to the well-known Charles Bonaparte, whose name we observe is sometimes decorated with a title, though we doubt not he looks to science for his most honorable distinctions.

From Philadelphia he proceeded to New-York, where he was received with flattering attention, and after ascending the Hudson, traversed the great western lakes, making probably the tour to which we have just alluded. The thought of publishing to the world the results of his labors, supplied him with a new inspiration and a more definite object; the thought of a solitary individual like himself, gaining a name in the old world by his laborious pilgrimages through the desert regions of the new, came in aid of his attachment to nature. He thought of it by day and dreamed of it by night; and by constantly endeavoring to bring his designs to perfection, succeeded at last to his own satisfaction and the surprise of others;—we say to their surprise, because we are not in the habit of seeing one man make himself familiar with every subject of a science and inquire into all its particulars, in any other way than by studying at home, and depending in part on the authority of others.

Whoever reads Mr. Audubon's account of his various tours, will see that he had a mind, which, in the midst of its devotion to a single object, found time to meditate upon all that was before him. When he embarked on the Ohio in his own boat, with his wife and his infant son, he is very eloquent in his description of the beauty of the river. It was in October, in the season called in this country the Indian summer, when the early frosts are over, and winter, after having given a gentle warning of his coming, suspends his step, as if unwilling to destroy the glory of the year. The trees had put on their rich and glowing colors, which, with the wild garlands of the vine that covered them, were darkly reflected in the waters. The haze that covered the landscape softened its lines and shadows, melting down the brightness of the sun, and changing the pale waning moon into a golden semicircle, seen as distinctly in the stream as in the sky. The ripple of their boat was the only sound which broke the silence, except when some large fish sprang upwards in pursuit of a shoal that darted out like silvery arrows, and fell in a little shower of light. At evening they heard the distant tinkling, as the cattle were returning to their homes, and saw the shadows mysteriously darken the shores. As the night fell, they caught the sound of the boatman's horn, as it came softened almost into music by the distance, and at times heard the solemn hooting of the great owl, or the muffled noise of its wings, as it sailed gently across the stream. We give the substance of this description, in order to

show our readers in what scenes his fancy was kindled and his taste formed. He had here the charm of solitude, together with the society,—which, for the time, he was anxious to secure,—of that race, which had excited in him from his earliest years, an interest deeper than man is often fortunate enough to inspire in man.

But Mr. Audubon affords us the contrast to this picture of solitude without desolation. Our readers have doubtless seen extracted in many of our papers, an account of his adventure in a cabin on his return from the upper Mississippi. He was crossing a prairie, and in taking shelter in this hut for the night, he happened to display his watch to the landlady, who immediately devised measures to secure it for herself, by removing him to a world where measures of time are not wanted. She was prevented by the seasonable arrival of two travellers, armed as usual in such journeys, who aided to secure her with her two sons. These, however well disposed to aid her, seem to have been at that time in no state to profit by her maternal instructions. For this design to murder, the wayfarers burned down the cabin, gave the furniture to an Indian who had warned Mr. Audubon of his danger, and justified the delinquents after the manner of the Regulators; a kind of extemporal police, established by volunteers, to supply the defective shortness of the arm of the law. When an individual is discovered to have committed an offence of this or any other dangerous description, a court of rather a popular character assembles and takes the case into serious consideration; the accused is arrested and brought before them, his character and proceedings sharply investigated, and if the verdict of his peers pronounce him guilty, he is advised as a friend to seek out some other climate, more favorable to his constitution. As there may be some little want of formality in the movements of the court, and the evidence may be at times deficient in precision, they judiciously lean to the side of mercy. In such cases, it is thought better for the suspected person to take the hint, and transport himself beyond the bounds of their jurisdiction; but if he choose to remain, and is found repeating his transgressions, at the next term of the court he is put on trial, and severely punished if guilty. In many cases, the punishment is inflicted by castigation of the person, and destroying his house by fire, as in the instance of the lady above-mentioned. Sometimes it is thought necessary to resort to the punishment of death, in which case the head is affixed to

a pole, as a terror to evil-doers. All these punishments are found effectual, particularly the last. This kind of legal process is fast disappearing from the West. As we have said, Mr. Audubon affords us the contrasts to his pictures. On the spot where the soul of the Ornithologist had so nearly taken flight, are found taverns, those outposts of civilization, and roads and cultivated fields, all redeemed from the wilderness in the short space of fifteen years. Now, the axe is heard ringing from the banks of the rivers, and the fire by night clears out a path through the oceans of wood; the elks, deer, and buffaloes are passing to other regions; our Government is aiding the cause in its own way, by grinding the Indians to powder, preaching all the while of mercy, justice, and protection; words, which make those who understand our language, decamp with all possible expedition. But we will not dwell on those surprising changes, which Mr. Flint has made familiar, in one of the most interesting works ever published in this country. Suffice it to say, that as men, not birds, are likely to be gainers by this miraculous transformation of a vast region, it is well that Mr. Audubon began his pilgrimages twenty years ago. We know not where the lover of a wilderness will go twenty years hence, to find the solitude he desires. Long before that time, we shall hear from travellers who have dammed up with their hands the parent fountains of the great western rivers, and shared with the eagle his perch on the highest turret of the Rocky mountains.

Mr. Audubon gives us a pleasing picture of the hospitality which prevails in the western country; a virtue, which by no means gains in the progress of civilization, but is apt, on the contrary, to retreat when the sign of the tavern is displayed; being unlike many other things in this world, most abundant when and where it is most wanted. Once, when journeying with his son, he chartered a wagon for a portion of his journey, and the wagoner engaging to take him by a 'short cut,' he had the satisfaction to find himself exposed to a storm of thunder, in a night so dark that they could not have proceeded even if they had known the way, every trace of which was lost. While sitting disconsolate and dripping like Naiads, they determined to try, since the sagacity of man had brought them into difficulty, whether the sagacity of the horses would take them out. They left the animals to arrange matters at their discretion, and they set forward, soon changing their course, and bringing them to a place where they heard the barking of dogs, and saw

a light through the trees. They were soon received into the cabin of a young couple, who were delighted with the opportunity of giving them a welcome. The negro boys were waked from their slumbers, and while some repaired the fire, others went forth to the hen-roost, whence proceeded notes, which indicated that the poultry were bearing their part, though reluctantly, in the duties of hospitality. The table was soon spread, but the whiskey was wanting, and the master of the house, afflicted at this destitution, mounted his horse, rode through the storm to his father-in-law three miles off, and returned with a keg of cider. Mr. Audubon says, that his son, who was about fourteen years old, drew near to him, and remarked 'how pleasant it was to have met with such good people.' The cabin afforded but one bed, and in spite of all remonstrances, the host and his wife insisted upon making a division of its component parts, which was done accordingly, and they were soon put into a sound sleep by a long story of the wagoner, showing how mysterious it was that he should have lost his way. This temple of hospitality was constructed of logs, and the floor formed of coarse *slabs* of tulip-tree. A spinning-wheel was standing in one corner; the wardrobe of the host was suspended from the wall on one side, and that of his wife from the other. A small cupboard contained a few dishes, cups, and tin pans; every thing was as neat as possible, but nothing indicated a condition above poverty, except an ornamented rifle. Nothing would induce the inmates to accept present or compensation; they detained the travellers as long as possible, and gave them up with regret. Truly, we should be inclined to call such a householder the most remarkable *rara avis* of Mr. Audubon's collection; but there is reason to believe, that such liberal kindness to the stranger is by no means uncommon, in any part of our western country.

Our traveller appears to be one of those who can make himself easy under any circumstances, and therefore is not quite so dependent on such attentions, as many others in the world. When he was patrolling the shores of Upper Canada, he says that some person stole his money, supposing that a naturalist could do very well without it. We would not defend the knavery, but the event showed, that the thief was not mistaken in his calculation. 'To have repined when the thing could not be helped, would not have been acting manfully,' says Mr. Audubon. It is a manly sentiment, but when things *can* be helped

there is no particular call for repining. He and his companion were left with seven dollars and a half, at the distance of fifteen hundred miles from home. At this time they were upon the water : when they landed, they procured a conveyance for five dollars to the town of Meadville, and took lodgings at a tavern upon the way. At night, they were shown into a room in which there were several beds ; some time after they had retired, three young girls came into the chamber, and having put out the light, placed themselves in a bed most distant from theirs. We beg our English readers, if such there be, to take notice that this was not in New-York nor Boston ; and in order to relieve as far as possible the fears of the worthy travellers of that nation, we think we can safely assure them, that if they venture into the United States, judging of those who follow from those who have gone before, neither man, woman nor child will have the least disposition to force themselves into their society, either by night or day. This custom is peculiar to the back-woods, and there seems to be some little excuse for it in the necessity of the case, where the whole house affords but one chamber. Mr. Audubon had thrown out a hint concerning portrait painting, and the damsels, supposing the travellers asleep, descanted concerning the taking of portraits, explaining to each other how delightful it would be to see their own. In the morning he commenced the sketches, and beside paying for his lodging, had the satisfaction of making some young hearts happy. When they arrived at Meadville, he took his portfolio under his arm, and after walking the streets awhile, begged permission to rest in a shop ; it was granted, and as a matter of course, the contents of the portfolio shown to the trader ; who not only contracted for a portrait of himself, but offered to find him as many sitters as were wanted. He procured a painting room, ornamented with hogsheads of oats, rolls of sole-leather, a drum and bassoon in the corner, fur caps along the wall, and a clerk's bed, swinging like a hammock, near the centre. Here he closed the windows with blankets to secure a *painter's light*, and sketched his sitters much to their satisfaction. The result was, that his pockets grew heavy and his heart light. At the *ordinary* of the public house, Mr. Audubon, being taken for a missionary, on account of his flowing hair, was asked to say grace, which he says he did with a fervent spirit. His pursuits seem to have had the right and natural effect upon his feeling ; for he tells us that he never has despaired of di-

vine protection, while engaged in studying the grand and beautiful works of God.

Among the entertaining incidents of his narrative, we find an account of his meeting with Daniel Boon, the celebrated patriarch of Kentucky. He happened to pass a night under the same roof with this remarkable man. Every thing about him, Mr. Audubon remarks, was striking. His stature approached the gigantic; his form indicated great personal strength, and his countenance bore an expression of thoughtfulness and resolution. At night, when Mr. Audubon undressed as usual, he merely took off his hunting-shirt and spread a blanket on the floor, which, he said, he preferred to the softest bed. He told Mr. Audubon, that many years before, he was taken prisoner by a party of Indians,—bound, and carried to their camp,—where he was frankly assured, by signs sufficiently expressive, that the next day would put an end to his mortal cares. The ladies of the party searched his dress, and much to their satisfaction laid their hands on a flask of *monongahela*, now a historical name, but then the designation of very strong whiskey. They drank freely of its contents, till the distant sound of a gun roused them; and the warriors immediately went to ascertain the cause, leaving his fair guardians to their vigils and their whiskey. Fortunately for him, they showed a decided preference for the latter, to which they paid such unceasing attention, that they were soon asleep. He then rolled himself to their fire, where he burned off his cords and seized his rifle. He was strongly tempted to return evil for good to his snoring body-guard, but he resisted, and after striking two or three chips with a tomahawk from an ash-tree, in order to mark the spot, he departed in peace.

Thirty years after this, when Colonel Boon had retreated before the approaching deluge of population, a person removed into Kentucky, where he laid claim to a large tract of land, one of the corners of which was marked, as the deed ran, ‘by an ash, which was notched by three blows from the tomahawk of a white man.’ The object was to find this tree, in order to ascertain the boundary of the land. But the tree had grown, and the wood had covered the scars; no trace of it could be found. Under these circumstances, the owner, who had heard of Colonel Boon’s adventure, sent to him to come and ascertain, if possible, the situation of the tree. Having no particular professional business, nor domestic cares to detain him at home, the veteran came as desired. Every thing was changed in the

country ;—but having formed a party, and waited for the moon to rise, he endeavored to find the spot where the Indians had encamped ; and having as he thought succeeded, they remained there till the break of day. When it was light, he examined the spot, and declared that an ash, then in sight, was the one. Proper witnesses being brought, he struck the bark ; no signs were seen ; he then cut deep into the tree, and at last found the distinct marks of the three notches, covered with thirty years' growth of wood. He was, when Mr. Audubon saw him, on his return to his favorite solitudes. This was a surprising effort of memory, when we consider what a near resemblance one such spot bears to another, and what a difference the hand of man soon makes in them all. Mr. Audubon saw the old hunter perform the favorite Kentucky feat of *barking off a squirrel*. He pointed to a squirrel on a tree at the distance of fifty paces, raised his piece slowly, and at the moment of the sharp, whip-like report, the bark immediately under the animal flew off in splinters, and the squirrel was whirled into the air, from which it fell dead. The dress of this 'stoic of the woods,' was a homespun hunting-shirt ; his feet were defended with moccasins, and his legs bare. It is difficult to explain the fascination of savage life,—but there are more examples than one, which prove that it is much more difficult to tame the wild, than to make a savage of the civilized man. It cannot be ascribed to an aversion to restraint,—for such men as this are in general self-denying in every respect. There must be some delight in the excitement of solitude, independence, and adventure, which strangers to them cannot understand. When the gates of the West were first thrown open, they were thronged with many such adventurers,—who pushed their way through the deep forests, guided by the sun by day, and sleeping at night by their fires. Their furniture, and in fact all their wealth, consisted of an axe and the all-important rifle ; these, with their horses, were all their preparation, except we take into account what was worth all the rest, a bold and resolute heart. Their way was beset with the Indians, who seem to have had prophetic misgivings that all these movements boded no good to them, and who had the advantage of matchless cunning, and perfect familiarity with the country. Others, who carried more baggage with them, built *arks* on the rivers, which, like that of Noah, were filled with all manner of living things,—but not equally secure of divine protection ; for the heavy-laden vessel

floated lazily down the stream,—in silence by day, and without light or fire by night, lest they should be discovered by the enemy on the shores. When the voyage or the journey was over, a shelter was to be provided, the soil to be subdued, and the enemy repelled. It is not strange that many became attached for life to adventure, when for years there was not a moment in which they could lay aside their arms. Wherever a settlement has been made in the deserts of our country, it has been, both at the East and West, established in the face of many dangers, threatened by the wild inhabitants; but there are some indications in our history of late, which show that it was easier to gain, than it is now to refrain from abusing our power.

Beside the opportunity of becoming acquainted with man, under wild and peculiar circumstances, Mr. Audubon has had the advantage, which as a naturalist he doubtless appreciates, of witnessing several convulsions of nature. He does not mention the years,—but we remember, that about twenty years ago, earthquakes became unpleasantly abundant in the South and West. It was probably at that time, that he was one day, when riding, surprised by a darkness in the heavens. Being as much accustomed to thunder-storms as the birds themselves, he took but little notice of it further than to urge his horse forward; but the animal paid no regard to his recommendation, and instead of advancing, planted his feet deliberately and firmly upon the ground. The rider was upon the point of dismounting to lead him, when the horse began to groan, hung down his head, and spread out his limbs as widely as possible. He was entirely at a loss to know what all this might mean, and could only suppose, that the animal was suddenly seized with mortal agony; when the earth began to roll, the shrubs and trees rocked and waved before him, and the convulsive shuddering of the whole frame of nature made it evident, that an earthquake was passing by. Shocks succeeded each other for several weeks; and as most of the houses were by no means towering structures, he became familiar with the prospect of being buried under their ruins. One night, after attending a wedding, he slept in the house of a physician, which was constructed of logs, and large enough to receive a considerable number of persons. At night, the earthquake lifted up its voice in such a manner, that all started from their slumbers, and rushed out, without waiting for the ceremony of the toilet, or even taking

care to secure any drapery at all. The clouds were floating wildly past the full moon, the trees waving like grass in the breeze,—when the Doctor, his prudence getting the better of his fears, ran to save his gallipots, which were dancing on their shelves in an awful manner, and about to leap to the floor; but arrived too late to prevent a general wreck. The moment the danger was past, and the promiscuous assembly began to consider their defect of raiment, a consternation of a different sort succeeded, and drove them back to bed with equal expedition.

Mr. Audubon was also fortunate enough to witness a hurricane. We say fortunate, since it crossed his path without injury to him. He describes it admirably, and we wish we had room to give his own full picture of the scene. He saw in the south-west a yellowish oval spot, and felt a sharp breeze passing, which increased rapidly, tearing away twigs and smaller branches from the trees, till the whole forest was in dizzy motion. The largest trunks of the wood were bent, and at last broken. The stormy whirlpool carried thick-rolling masses of foliage and boughs, together with a cloud of dust; and the gigantic trees were seen writhing and groaning, as if in agony, for a moment, when they fell in shapeless heaps of ruin. This great work of destruction was over soon; but a shower of small branches followed in its wake, as if drawn onward by some mysterious power; the sky had a lurid, greenish hue, and the atmosphere was filled with a sulphury smell. The path of this tornado extended many hundred miles. Mr. Audubon was on horseback this time, as well as before, but the animal betrayed no alarm. The reason, doubtless, of his perceiving the earthquake so much earlier than his master, was that his feet were on the ground, and his rider's were not; and had they been in the same circumstances, the biped would probably have been less affected than the animal, who was shaken at four points instead of two.

We have given this general account of the work before us, to show the variety of entertaining subjects, which the writer has introduced; and we commend his judgment in so doing. It takes from the scientific air of the work, and offers an attraction to a greater number of readers. It also serves to show, through how many and various scenes he has passed in his wanderings, and thereby gives a livelier impression of the enthusiasm and resolution, which such an enterprise requires. On one occasion his fortitude was severely tried. Having secured two hundred of his original drawings in a wooden box, he left them

in the care of a friend, during his absence on a journey. When he returned, he re-claimed his treasure ; and found, that a couple of Norway rats, acting, doubtless, on the principle that 'a living dog is better than a dead lion,' had gnawed his papers to pieces, and feathered their nest with one thousand painted inhabitants of the air. This was a severe blow ; and many men under it would have forsworn the pursuit forever. But Mr. Audubon thought as Bottom did, that 'what could not be endured must be cured ;' and after a short period of suffering, took his gun, note-book and pencils, and went forth into the woods again. Nothing daunted him, where he could revive his strength by communion with nature ; but when he was on the way to England, and when first walking the streets of Liverpool, he says that his heart almost failed him, and that he longed to retreat into the woods. But this desolate feeling only made the kindness of enlightened men in that city, which was freely given to him, more animating and delightful. After receiving the most encouraging attentions there, he proceeded to Edinburgh, where his reception was equally flattering ;—and there he commenced the publication of his *Illustrations*. It would have been continued there, had not his engraver advised him to seek an artist in London.

Mr. Audubon, we observe, addresses a word to critics : but these are works with which critics have not much to do ; or with respect to which, they can only discharge that part of their duty which is generally thought to give them least pleasure,—we mean, praise. No one can see these splendid drawings, and compare them with the ordinary illustrations of natural history,—in which animals appear as spiritless as if they had been sitting for their portraits,—without admiring his taste and skill. Instead of a solitary individual, we have here groups of each kind, in all the attitudes of life ; and as the plumage of birds is often entirely changed in passing from youth to maturity,—as the female, also, generally differs very much in color from the male,—a single representation would be of little value. We might easily criticise the drawing and coloring in some small respects, and say that it differs from our limited observation ; but the obvious reply is, that he has seen hundreds where we have seen one. The history of the birds of our country is still imperfect, and whoever undertakes to reduce it to a system, will find every new explorer correcting some of his errors. What he describes as the constant habits of a class,

may appear to be only accidental peculiarities of individuals ; and as birds are affected by climate, food, and various other circumstances, the result of many observations will be exceedingly apt to overturn the theories and systems built upon a few. We do not, therefore, complain of the want of systematic order in the arrangement of the subjects of this work ;—at present, there would be no advantage in such an undertaking. But when this great work is completed, we think Mr. Audubon will do well to follow his own suggestion, and to give a systematic view of the American birds, and his own contributions to the known number. It is well that the world should know the exact value of his labors, before he gives the work over to other hands.

The science of Ornithology is indebted to Mr. Audubon for the discovery and description of an eagle, to which he has appropriately given the name of Washington. It is the largest and most powerful of all the race of birds. Mr. Nuttall suspects that it may exist in Europe, and be the same with the *great* sea-eagle, described by Brisson, which in size and plumage resembles this species, more than any other. Mr. Audubon first met with it, when engaged in a trading voyage on the upper Mississippi. An intelligent Canadian, on seeing this bird floating above them, remarked that it was the great eagle, and the only one he had seen since he left the lakes. He described it as a bird, which built its nest in shelves of rocks, and lived by fishing like the fishing-hawk, sometimes following the hunters to secure the animals they slew. Mr. Audubon was convinced from this account, that the bird was undescribed, and says that the feelings of Herschel, when he discovered his planet, must have been less rapturous than his own.

But several years passed, before he encountered it again. He was one day engaged in collecting cray-fish near Green river, in Kentucky, where a range of high cliffs approaches the stream, when he found traces of an eagle, which his companion said was the bald eagle in its immature state. Mr. Audubon, knowing that this species builds in trees, and not on the rocks, was persuaded that this was an error ; his companion maintained the contrary, and assured him that he had seen the old eagle dive and catch a fish. This also was unlike the bald eagle, which, as all know, gets his living in a less honest way. Not being able to decide the point, they agreed to wait till the old birds came to feed their young. Two hours passed

heavily away, when the coming of the parent was announced by the loud hissing of the two young ones, which crawled to the edge of the rock, to receive a fish which was brought them. The observers kept a profound silence, but when the mother returned shortly after, also bearing a fish, her quicker eye detected the spies, and she set up a loud scream, when both birds hovered over them with a growling cry, till they left the spot. When they returned a day or two after, intending to scale the cliff and storm the nest, they found that the birds had anticipated their design, and that the whole family had retreated. It was not till two years afterward, that he saw this bird again. He was near the village of Henderson, with his double-barrelled gun, when he saw it rising from an enclosure where some animals had been slaughtered, and alight upon a low tree. Thence the eagle looked at him calmly and fearlessly, till he fired, and it fell dead. The bird which he describes, is an adult male, and measures in length three feet seven inches, in extent ten feet and two inches. This is a prodigious size ; but among all birds of prey, the female is larger than the male. If this rule hold good here, and there is no reason to doubt it, we may account for its not building on trees, as a French writer explains the reason of the condor's laying its eggs on the naked rock ; 'because the excessive sweep of its wings makes it impossible for it to enter the woods !' Mr. Audubon compares this bird minutely with the sea-eagle, and shows wherein they differ ; in the bird of Washington, the tail is considerably longer than the closed wings ; in the sea-eagle the length is equal. The sea-eagle resembles it in most points, but cannot be the same, being merely the young of the white-tailed eagle. Mr. Nuttall suggests, that a larger species may be confounded with this young bird by European naturalists, a thing which has often happened in other similar cases.

Another of Mr. Audubon's discoveries, is the *Muscicapa Bonapartii*, or Bonaparte's flycatcher ; so called in honor of the naturalist of that name. It is a small bird, with a simple note ; he was not fortunate enough to meet with another, though Mr. Nuttall, who is not likely to be mistaken, thinks that he has seen the same bird in the Botanic Garden at Cambridge. The one here described was found in Louisiana, near St. Francisville. It was engaged in a quarrel with another. When Mr. Audubon fired, this one fell, slightly wounded, but

still full of life and spirit, so that he was able to give a lively representation of it. He has placed this bird on the *magnolia grandiflora*, but he tells us that we are not to suppose, that he has undertaken to place every bird on the plant with which it is most familiar, or from which it gathers its food. He has, however, added much to the beauty and value of his work, by this happy alliance between birds and flowers. Another fly-catcher, which Mr. Audubon has discovered, is named in honor of Mr. Selby. It was also found near St. Francisville, and was so fearless, that it came up within the reach of his gun. It kept on snapping its bill and swallowing insects with great indifference to his presence or his opinion, till he felt obliged to shoot it, lest he should lose the opportunity. He afterwards shot the female near the same place.

Mr. Audubon has been able in the same way to compliment other friends and distinguished persons. In Louisiana he found a beautiful wren, to which he gave the name of Bewick, whose engravings on wood, and work on the birds of Great Britain, are well known in this country. In these plates a bird is represented, which Mr. Audubon has named the Louisiana water-thrush, having assured himself, as he believes, that it differs from the New-York thrush, which we sometimes find in Massachusetts late in the season. The common water-thrush is very shy, but this, he remarks, is very unsuspicious, and familiar. The color of the feet and the shape of the tail are different, and the Louisiana thrush does not, like the other, wade in the water. The common water-thrush, while on its eastern visits, does not sing; while this bird, which he has never seen further east than Georgia, has a note as powerful, mellow, and almost as varied as the nightingale itself. It resides in the low grounds of the State whose name it bears; it is seen perched on a low bough, standing erect, and with its throat swelling, running through changes of tone, as clear and well defined as the notes of the piano. Its compass embraces two octaves; it begins on the highest, and moves gradually to the lowest note, which is sometimes lost, if there be any agitation in the air. Its voice is sometimes heard in the water and at night.

Mr. Audubon has named a warbler, which resembles the Maryland yellow-throat, *Sylvia Roscoe*, as a mark of gratitude for the kind attentions which he received from that distinguished man. To show the difference between this bird and the pre-

ceding, the author has made the description and illustration of the new species to follow immediately that of the other. Their habits are different, he says, though in form and plumage they are very much alike. In honor of another naturalist, he has named another warbler *Sylvia Vigorsii*, Vigors's warbler, but has given us no description of the habits of the bird, having never met with more than one, a male which he found upon the spiderwort on his farm, when he resided on the shore of the Schuylkill. The same family has furnished him with the opportunity of complimenting another friend; he has called it Children's warbler, in honor of Mr. Children of the British Museum.

Among the hawks, he has found one to which he has given the name of Stanley, after the President of the Linnean Society of London, in gratitude for kindness received from that nobleman. Mr. Nuttall seems to suggest a doubt, whether this be not the same with one described by Bonaparte, which bears the name of Mr. Cooper. It is a strong and daring bird. The author says, that one morning, in the State of Louisiana, he heard a cock crow, and immediately one of these hawks flew by, so near him that he might have struck it down with his gun. Very soon he heard the cackling of the hens, and saw the hawk, after rising a few feet in the air, fall again to the ground. On approaching, he found the hawk grappling with the cock, who was soon killed by his powerful foe, his neck being pierced and his breast torn by his claws. Mr. Audubon shot him, and honored him with a place in this work. He afterwards saw a female hawk of this species attack a party of chickens, but the hen came up in time, and flew against the hawk with such violence, as to throw it on its back, and beat it with her feet and bill, till he came up and secured it for his collection. This bird feeds on partridges, hares, and pigeons. In the southern States, it is known by the name of the great pigeon-hawk. Its nest resembles that of the crow.

Traill's fly-catcher, Rathbone's warbler, Henslow's bunting, and Harlan's hawk, are birds named for various friends of the writer. Cuvier's regulus is so called, in compliment to that eminent man; and a small hawk is oddly enough called, in honor of Napoleon, by the nickname which he bore among his soldiers, 'the little corporal.'

Beside adding to the list of our birds, Mr. Audubon has increased our stock of information concerning those already

known, by relating anecdotes of his own intercourse with them, and facts in their history, which had escaped all other observers. The mocking-bird appears in his description, like a new creation of fancy. You see him flying in graceful circles round his mate, with his eyes gleaming with wild delight ; then alighting near her, and bowing with his wings lightly opened, you hear him pouring out a concert of all sweet sounds, as if his heart were bursting with rapture. When they have made their nest, if the eggs are displaced or removed during the short absences of the mother, they breathe a low mournful note, as if in sympathy with each other. They do not fear the presence of man, for they know that they have enemies more dangerous than he ; they come familiarly to the gardens and plantations, sometimes perching on roofs and chimney-tops, and enchanting all who hear them with their unrivalled song. One thing in their history is very remarkable. It is known that some of them visit the eastern States, being seen occasionally in the vicinity of Boston. When these wanderers return, they are instantly known by the others, who attack them, as if to punish them for wishing to be wiser than their neighbors ; and instead of listening to the story of their travels, force them to keep apart, at least till they have ascertained that their manners are not, as is sometimes the case, altered for the worse by making the grand tour. We knew that these sectional jealousies were tolerably strong in men, and why wonder that they are found in birds ? Really, the creature that lacks discourse of reason, might most naturally be expected to indulge such feelings and passions.

We have endeavored to give such an account of the contents of this work, as would induce our readers to make themselves acquainted with it, and have not said a word respecting the doctrine of types, affinities, analogies, progress, development, or quinary circles. If Mr. Audubon had contented himself with Linnean descriptions, he would have had the honor of discovering more birds than readers. Such books as Dr. Lasham's General History of Birds, though convenient works of reference for those who are acquainted with the subject, are not particularly fascinating to those who desire to learn. We are not so much troubled in mind, however, as Mr. Rennie, well known as the author of *Insect Architecture* and *Architecture of Birds*, who is for cutting up all system and casting it away ; on the contrary, we think his own entertaining writings

would be improved by a little more attention to arrangement ; for though a work which is nothing but index is dry reading, a work without index is at times exquisitely provoking, as in reading the history of France, Mezerai is less agreeable than Henault. Classification we take to be mere matter of convenience ; and in a collection of specimens, we certainly would rather have the birds without the labels, than the labels without the birds. The way to become interested in this study and to pursue it with success, is to learn it in the book of nature ; its pages are full of inspiration ; and while the hundred volumes of scientific ornithologists create no general interest in their favorite pursuits, whoever will go into the fields and forests, and look about him with an attentive eye, will study the science most successfully, learning it not by memory, but by heart.

ART. IV.—*Life of Sebastian Cabot.*

A Memoir of Sebastian Cabot : with a Review of the History of Maritime Discovery. Illustrated by Documents from the Rolls, now first published. Philadelphia. Carey & Lea. 1831.

The present age is honorably distinguished by that spirit of thorough investigation into the history of the past, of which Niebuhr and Sharon Turner afford the most remarkable, but by no means the only instances. The evidence upon which we formed our belief in the events of by-gone ages, has been carefully sifted by an accurate examination of original documents and contemporaneous authorities, and we have been taught to correct the erroneous impressions we had imbibed from the pages of popular historians. The consequences have, in some cases, been startling. We find that many insulated transactions have been greatly over-rated, as to the magnitude of their effects ; while in others, that have been regarded as little more than mere personal anecdotes, we can now trace the germs of changes, which have affected the destinies of millions. The agency of distinguished men in the events of their time has been incorrectly estimated ; the profound and just thinkers have passed for visionaries and dreamers, while the weak and